7: Thompson--379-380 J-4 (no date) 1937 Laotians
116, 659, 797

"The static condition of the Laotian Mission moved the Society to change its policy. As in Annam, they are trying to appeal to all classes of the people through education, books, and medical care. The cult of phi, or evil spirits, is so deep-rooted in Laotians and so universally practised in cases of sickness, that Western science and social service can perhaps find there the most advantageous point for attacking native superstitions. Of course, here as elsewhere, they encounter the administration's jealous rivalry, but as yet in Laos penetration of any sort is so superficial that there is room for all comers. The government has recently dealt a blow to Mission prestige, as it did in Cambodia, by becoming the patron of Buddhism. Though recently founded, the Buddhist Institute in Luang-Prabang aims to train bonzes who formerly went to Bangkok for their instruction, as well as their investiture. This not only counteracts Siamese influence--and Bangkok has always been the lodestar of Laotian aspirations--but it is part of the French policy with Indianized peoples to revive their cultural heritage. In 1907 Tournier chose Vientiane to transform into a modern city, for he thought [380] that it might attract all Laotians thither and away from Bangkok, the moral capital of the Thai people. It remains to be seen whether all these attempts will be successful."

Military organization. As a wise sovereign who was the friend of peace but knew how to prepare for war, Sam-Sène-Thaï profited by the census in order to reorganize his kingdom's army. He raised its strength to 150,000 men, whom he divided into three distinct groups: the first to form an interior police force, the second to be specially drilled in defending the country from foreign attack and the third as a reserve force. The total army was divided into five corps with 30,000 fighting men each, plus 20,000 coolies responsible for provisioning the army. The warriors fought on horseback or on elephants and had lances and swords for weapons. They also had a few flintlock rifles which were originally imported from China and which the Laotians were already learning how to make themselves. 701 175* 643* /659/

This large military force made no small contribution /57/ to the tranquillity of Lan-Xang. Sam-Sène-Thaï also seems to have been a clever politician. Already allied to Siam by his marriage, he strengthened his neighborly relations with Lan-Na by taking Nang-One-Sa, a daughter of the king of Xieng-Mai, for his second wife. Moreover, the fall of the Mongol dynasty and the accession of the Ming to the throne were of no small importance to him, if we are to believe H. Maspero who relates that he received Chinese titles in 1404 (1). After the epic of Fa-Ngoun this was a happy 701 643* 648* 175*

1. According to H. Maspero, Bulletin de l'E. F.E.O., Vol. XVIII, No. 3. Cf. R. Grousset, op. cit. /Histoire de l'Extrême-Orient/, p. 612, note 4.

stage of calm in the enjoyment of the fruits of the preceding reign, and when he died in 1416 he handed down to his successor a prosperous kingdom which was solidly based and living in peace, and all the while dreaded by its neighbors.

LAN-KHAM-DÈNG (1375), KING 1416-1428.

When the king died he left a numerous progeny, six sons and five daughters whom Nang-Keo-Yopha and Nang-One-Sa had given him. We do not know the reason why it was not the eldest Mun-Ban, but the second son Lane-Kham-Dèng who succeeded his father. The second son /58/ mounted the throne at a time when Tran-Ninh had fallen prey to dynastic disorders, he welcomed the queen Nang-Phom-Dam and her son Kham-Phong when they were 643* 648* 175*

693 than of the rights of the parties. Our administration is making praiseworthy efforts to halt these abuses. Those who sell justice in this way are removed from their posts, and it is to be hoped that within a few years' time most, if not all, of the Laotian judges will be upright and disinterested. As a means toward stopping these deplorable habits and informing the parties in lawsuits of the legal costs which they will regularly be asked to pay, Lieutenant-colonel Tournier took a very useful first step in April 1898, by setting up a schedule of court costs in accordance with the laws and customs of Vien-Tiane (I).

695 691 435

(I) The following, for example, are the court costs to be paid in a case of theft of domesticated animals:

Legal costs.....	15.00 francs	to be paid by each accused person.
Clerk.....	3.75 "	
Archivist.....	2.25 "	
Court roll.....	1.50 "	
Prison costs.....	11.25 "	

The legal costs are divided as follows:

Tiao-Muong.....	5.00 francs	15 francs.
Oupahat.....	2.50 "	
Judge hearing the case..	7.50 "	

The prison costs are divided as follows:

Jailer.....	5.00 francs	11.25 francs.
Upkeep for food for prisoners whom their families cannot feed or who do not work outside.....	6.25 "	
Lighting and upkeep of prison.....		

It goes without saying that, in addition to court costs, the guilty parties are liable to a fine, which, in the present case, would be 24 francs per person.

[499]

4. THE TAX STRUCTURE

a. Direct taxes

651 654 The direct taxes include the head tax, the optional redemption of statute labor and the licenses for Foreign Oriental merchants.

A census taken before the end of each year by the native authorities and checked by the administrators who are heads of provinces makes

it possible to draw up the tax rolls for the following year.

A head tax is owed by every able-bodied man between the ages of eighteen and sixty, except for bonzes, pagoda servants, the native authorities, men who have served for four years in the civil guard, militiamen on active duty, invalids and liberated slaves.

There are four categories of registered persons:

1. Those of the great Thai race, who pay five francs and also owe twenty days of service in kind in Upper Laos, and ten in Lower Laos. This service may be redeemed upon payment of five francs;

2. Those of the other races such as Khas, Meos, Yaos, etc., who pay 2.50 francs and owe ten days of service in kind, redeemable for 2.50 francs;

3. The Annamites, who pay a head tax of five francs and do not owe any service in kind;

4. Foreign Orientals, who pay a head tax of 12.50 francs per year and do not owe any statute labor. If they are merchants, they pay a license fee of five francs per shop.

[500] B. Indirect taxes

The indirect taxes include:

1. Travel permits and passports;
2. Permits for weapons;
3. Administrative fines;
4. Local taxes levied on products and animals exported from Laos.

[484] For travel permits, Laotians pay a fixed fee of 0.50 franc per person and per permit. Foreign Orientals pay 1.875 francs for a permit which is good for three months.

[411] Permits for weapons occasion the collection of a tax of 1.50 francs. Annual renewal of the permit is obligatory, and costs 0.75 franc.

[421] There are as yet no taxes on land in Laos. It would have been extremely difficult, if not impossible, to levy such a tax in view of the present state of the country, which has no land registry, and with the system of property (1) such as it exists at present.

(1) As regards public domain, we have maintained the custom which is consecrated by the local laws and usages. By virtue of these usages and these laws, the State is sole proprietor of the land and everything under it, without any exception, no matter how it is being exploited or what establishments have been made there,